**CCTV in Victoria Street, Richmond**

**02 December 2016**

Yarra Council Mayor Amanda Stone today acknowledged the State Government’s announcement of CCTV on the corner of Lennox and Victoria Streets, Richmond, which is something that local traders have been requesting for a long time.

 At the same time she called on the government to join Yarra Council in a more comprehensive approach, and to commit the resources needed to make a difference to the lives of those involved in and affected by drug dependence.

“CCTV alone won’t solve the problem,” she said. “A holistic approach including a medically supervised injecting facility, health and education programs, urban renewal, community partnerships and law enforcement, is required to achieve a safer and more liveable environment on Victoria Street.

“To achieve this we need the State Government to make a significant investment in the North Richmond precinct as a matter of urgency.”

The most current data shows the City of Yarra has three times the metropolitan average of illegal drug overdoses leading to death and is the highest ranked LGA for overdose deaths per capita with 499 in the municipality compared with only 43.63 for Greater Melbourne.

In 2015 alone, more than 60,000 syringes were collected across the City of Yarra as a result of public injecting – a 30% increase on 2014.

Cr Stone said “Witnessing drug use, discarded syringes and other drug paraphernalia affects our community’s enjoyment of the area and distresses residents, traders and visitors.

“Illicit drug use is a public health issue. A life of drug dependence is not a choice most people make. It’s often a last resort. Much more needs to be done to help people before they reach that point.

“The State Government is primarily responsible for health and there’s a need for increase resources to address the causes of drug dependence in the first place.”

Council is undertaking an extensive engagement program with local residents, traders, service providers, Victoria Police and other stakeholders to listen to a range of views and experiences to develop a shared vision for the future of Victoria Street.

An invitation will be extended to the state government. Council is committed to managing the safety and amenity impacts associated with illicit drug use, but has limited powers and responsibilities, whereas the State Government is responsible for the health, social services, law enforcement and justice systems.

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